

How to Use Your Liberty

Steve Hereford, Pastor-Teacher 9/13/20 (c) 2020

1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1

INTRODUCTION

1. Please take God's Word and turn with me to 1 Corinthians chapter 10.
2. We are looking today at 10:23-11:1.
3. This is the last section on Christian liberty.
4. In fact it is a summary of everything Paul has been saying since chapter 8.
5. Read 1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1.

6. Ministry to others should be our number one priority.
7. the reason we have spiritual gifts is for that purpose.
8. The reason we are told to put others first is because others matter.
9. For a church to grow everyone has to do their part.
10. What is our part?
11. Ephesians 4:15-16 (NASB) but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.
12. Using our liberty for personal gain is detrimental to the body of Christ.
13. It doesn't think about others.
14. It's only focused on self gratification.
15. Just as spiritual gifts are for the edification of others so is our liberty.

16. How we use it is determined by another person's conscience.
17. If what you are free to do violates another's conscience then you are not at liberty to do that.
18. As we conclude Paul's subject of Christian liberty, we are going to hear Paul's summary of everything he has stated since chapter 8.
19. His summary includes 5 principles for how to use your liberty.
20. Let's consider the first one...

1

We Should Edify Others Rather Than Gratify Ourselves (10:23)

A. EVEN THOUGH ALL THINGS ARE PERMISSABLE NOT ALL THINGS ARE PROFITABLE (V.23A)

1. Paul already made a similar statement like this in 6:12

He said, "All things are lawful for me but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything."

1. The word “lawful” (exestin) is repeated in 10:23 and means “to be permitted” (BDAG) or “allowed” (LEH)
 1. It occurs all together a total of four times in 1 Corinthians (twice in 6:12, twice in 10:23)
 2. Some believe when Paul used the word in a phrase he was probably quoting from the gnostic element at Corinth (F. F. Bruce, 1 and 2 Corinthians [NCBC, 1971; repr 1980], p. 62; H. Conzelmann prefers to see its provenance in Stoicism, 1 Corinthians [Eng. tr. Hermeneia, 1975], pp. 108f) quoted by Harry, J. E. “Lawful; Lawfully.” Ed. Geoffrey W Bromiley. The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Revised 1979–1988 : 92. Print.)
 3. Others believe Paul had probably used the phrase when he preached in Corinth, and some of the believers there apparently had taken it as a slogan to justify anything they wanted to do.
 4. The apostle explains earlier in this letter, however, that his use of that phrase in relation to Christian liberty means all things not specifically identified in Scripture as sinful.

5. Before he first mentions that “all things are lawful” (6:12), he specifically says that “the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God,” and proceeds to give an extensive list of sins that characterize the unrighteous (6:9–10).

6. His use of all things are lawful always refers to questionable practices, the gray areas of Christian living that are not specifically forbidden in the Bible.

(MacArthur, John F., Jr. 1 Corinthians. Chicago: Moody Press, 1984. Print. MacArthur New Testament Commentary.)

2. Though we have freedom in Christ, that does not mean that everything we choose to do is profitable to our Christian life

1. The word “profitable” (symphero) (pres.act.ind.verb) means “beneficial” (BDAG), “useful” (Zodhiates), “advantageous” (Louw-Nida). One writer translates it “more to your interest” (R.E. Brown)

B. EVEN THOUGH ALL THINGS ARE PERMISSABLE NOT ALL THINGS EDIFY (V.23B)

1. Not only is it not beneficial or profitable “but not all things edify”

2. The word “edify” (oikodomeo) means “to build or strengthen” (BDAG)

3. The basic meaning is “to build a house,” and, by extension, the term refers to the literal or figurative building of anything.
4. It is often used in the New Testament to describe the spiritual growth, or upbuilding, of believers.
5. Whatever contributes to spiritual growth constitutes what is profitable, or beneficial, helpful, advantageous, or useful. Only things that are profitable are able to edify. (MacArthur, John F., Jr. 1 Corinthians. Chicago: Moody Press, 1984. Print. MacArthur New Testament Commentary.)

2

We Should Seek What is Best for Others Rather Than Ourselves (10:24)

A. DON'T SEEK YOUR OWN GOOD (V.24A)

1. Paul is building off his previous statement
2. Our building up should include others not just ourselves
3. This verse and the context of Christian liberty shows that “other” are more important than ourselves

4. John MacArthur tells a story of a pastor friend he has who was preaching on this passage
5. After he was done he had a time of testimony and asked the congregation to share experiences of giving up something for the sake of someone else.
6. Except for one man who said he did not drink or smoke around other Christians, no one responded.
7. After the service a number of people told the pastor, “For the first time in my life I realized that I don’t really give up anything for the sake of others.” (MacArthur, John F., Jr. 1 Corinthians. Chicago: Moody Press, 1984. Print. MacArthur New Testament Commentary.)

B. SEEK THE GOOD OF YOUR NEIGHBOR (V.24B)

1. Paul said in Philippians 2:3-4 (NASB) Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; 4 do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.
2. In Romans 12:10 (NASB) Paul said to “Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor.”

3. We are told in Galatians 6:2 (NASB) to “Bear one another’s burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.”
4. We are not to seek our own good, but that of [our] neighbor.
5. Who is your neighbor?
6. This is the Greek word heteros which means “other but different, another” (WSNTDICT)
7. In the context it is referring to another believer
8. Paul lived this principle in his own life (see verse 33)

3

We Should Live in Freedom But Not Be Legalistic (10:25-27)

A. YOU'RE FREE TO EAT ANYTHING IN THE MEAT MARKET (V.25A)

“Eat anything that is sold in the meat market”

1. The “meat market” is the latin macellum and was an ordinary butcher shop

2. Paul tells the Corinthians to be altogether unconcerned about the nature of the meat that is sold in the ordinary butchershops; they are to buy and to eat and to be satisfied. (Lenski, R. C. H. The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistle to the Corinthians. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1963. Print.)
3. So since idols are nothing, the sacrifice of meat is nothing either. They are free to eat.
4. Peter was given this lesson in Acts 10:9-16

B. DON'T ASK QUESTIONS FOR CONSCIENCE' SAKE BECAUSE IT ALL BELONGS TO GOD (V.25B-26)

“Without asking questions for conscience' sake; For the earth is the LORD'S, and all it contains.”

1. Christians are to make no investigations regarding the origin of any piece of meat; they are not to inquire whether it is a portion from an idol sacrifice or not” (Lenski) “for conscience sake”
2. Because “the earth is the LORD'S, and all it contains” (v.26)
 1. That is a quotation of Psalm 24:1 which says, “The earth is the LORD'S, and all it contains, the world, and those who

dwell in it.”

2. Psalms 50:12 (NASB) “If I were hungry I would not tell you, for the world is Mine, and all it contains.”

C. IF YOU EAT WITH UNBELIEVERS DON'T ASK WHERE THE MEAT CAME FROM FOR CONSCIENCE' SAKE (V.27)

“If one of the unbelievers invites you and you want to go, eat anything that is set before you without asking questions for conscience’ sake.”

1. Again your conscience is in view here not the unbelievers
2. Eat and enjoy because you know the meat is a provision from the Lord

4

We Should Consider the Conscience of Others Rather Than Ours (10:28-30)

A. IF IT IS REVEALED WHERE THE MEAT CAME FROM DON'T EAT IT FOR CONSCIENCE' SAKE (V.28)

“But if anyone says to you, “This is meat sacrificed to idols,” do not eat it, for the sake of the one who informed you, and for conscience’ sake.”

1. To eat is selfish
2. It is not loving the weak brother or sister

B. OUR EATING MEAT THAT WAS SACRIFICED TO IDOLS IS BASED ON ANOTHER'S CONSCIENCE (VV.29-30)

“I mean not your own conscience, but the other man’s; for why is my freedom judged by another’s conscience? 30 If I partake with thankfulness, why am I slandered concerning that for which I give thanks?”

1. The whole issue is your weak brother
2. What you do in private is another matter
3. That’s why I have asked many times, “Why do we always announce that we’re doing, especially if it has the potential of causing a brother or sister to stumble?”
4. If you don’t care about the potential stumbling of your brother or sister, you’re not loving them, you’re only loving yourself — and that goes against everything Christianity stands for.

5

We Should Glorify God in Everything (10:31-11:1)

A. BY EATING AND DRINKING ANYTHING (V.31)

“Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”

1. Eating and drinking or whatever you do should bring God glory
2. So eating with a pure conscience brings God glory
3. Refraining from eating for the sake of a weaker brother brings God glory
4. Everything we do in this life has one purpose — to glorify God

B. BY NOT OFFENDING OTHERS (V.32)

“Give no offense either to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God.”

1. We cannot bring God glory if we are causing others to stumble
2. The word “offense” (aproskopos, adj) means to be “blameless, faultless, innocent” (Greek-English Dictionary of the NT)

3. Paul stated this at the beginning of his treatment on liberty in 1 Corinthians 8:13 (NASB) Therefore, if food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause my brother to stumble.
4. He also stated it in Romans 14:13 (NASB) Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this—not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother's way.
5. He even said in 2 Corinthians 6:3 (NASB) giving no cause for offense in anything, so that the ministry will not be discredited.

C. BY SEEKING THE PROFIT OF MANY (V.33)

“Just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit but the profit of the many, so that they may be saved.”

1. Our desire is to strengthen the weak and to save the lost
2. How we live does have an impact on both
3. Paul sought to “please all men in all things...so that they may be saved”
4. Remember what he said in 9:19, “For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I may win

more.”

D. BY IMITATING PAUL (11:1)

“Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.”

1. Paul concludes with using his own life as an example
2. He’s done that many times in this letter
3. Remember he laid aside his right to be supported
4. He said in 8:13, “If food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause my brother to stumble.”
5. This is what he means in 10:24 to “let no one seek his own good, but that of his neighbor.”
6. We must imitate Paul’s example but we must make sure we are living a life that others can follow

APPLICATION

1. If you are going to use your liberty in Christ, then use it wisely
2. Edify others rather than yourself

3. Seek what is best for others not what is best for you
4. Live in freedom but don't be legalistic
5. Consider the conscience of others
6. Glorify God in everything
7. If you do this, then you are using your liberty correctly and God is being glorified because of it
8. Need a human illustration? Consider Paul
9. He sought to imitate Christ
10. Liberty means nothing without Christ in your life
11. Do you know Him this morning?
12. If not, you can by opening His word, the Bible, and seeing Him as He is revealed there
13. John calls Him God who became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:1, 14)
14. Matthew said He became flesh in order to save His people from their sins (Mat.1:23)

15. Paul said in Romans 10:9, if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.
16. That means you are willing to do what Jesus said in Luke 9:23-24 (NASB) And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. 24 For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.
17. Call on Him now as we pray.
18. Let's pray